



## Weapons workout

**Automatic Weapons Committee teaches firepower fundamentals**

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**Individual tactical training lets cadets test their personal best** *Page 4*



# Green-to-Gold trades stripes for bars

Story and photo by  
2nd Lt. Simon Flake

A bar of gold will be added to the Army green of prior-service cadets upon their completion of National Advanced Leadership Camp and other MS-IV requirements. There are several different ways in which enlisted soldiers can transform themselves into commissioned officers. One program that provides an opportunity for contract scholarships to become officers is the Green-to-Gold program. Green-to-Gold allows an enlisted soldier to attend college and participate in the Reserve Officers Training Corps.

The best way for a soldier to get into the program is through a Green-to-Gold advisor. This advisor is an expert in the process a soldier must go through to become enrolled in college and attend that college's ROTC program. The Green-to-Gold advisor provides valuable information on the program to make best use of their time and effort.

The Green-to-Gold advisor for the 4th Region (ROTC) was Maj. Gary Pearson, who has moved on to a new assignment and has been replaced by Capt. Michael Ladd. Pearson was responsible for most of the eligible people from Fort Lewis and Japan. Pearson said, "I feel prior-service cadets have a valuable place in the Army. They have a lot to offer due to experience as enlisted personnel."

Green-to-Gold cadets are well-equipped with a wealth of knowledge and experience that provides them an advantage compared to those with no prior military experience. Previously an airborne ranger, Cadet David Napper, from Fayetteville State University said, "You have a little more experience and you are able to help out some of the other cadets that don't have as much experience." When prior-ser-



Cadet Nick Daugherty (far right), from Stephen F. Austin University, takes a break with his fellow platoon members after completing the daylight portion of the Land Navigation practical test.

vice cadets use their knowledge and experience in this manner, they provide their leaders with valuable assistance in the process of molding and shaping other warrior leaders.

Another key ingredient prior service cadets add to ROTC is motivation. Cadet Bridget Washington, from Northwestern State University, was a former enlisted dental assistant. Although she is attending NALC, she admits to not always feeling up to the challenge to become an officer.

"I always wanted to be an officer but I didn't think I qualified," said Washington, "But I put in my paperwork and tried, and I think this just proves that anybody can accomplish whatever they want to do."

Although prior-service cadets have years of Army experience under them, they still learn a lot from the ROTC curriculum. Cadet Nick Daugherty, from Stephen F. Austin, served in

the Army as an airborne, air assault ranger with the 10th Mountain Division.

"For them to instill knowledge of operations orders, how to run them and put them together, helps you understand the big picture of the mission and how all working parts come together in a unit," said Daugherty.

Green-to-Gold is a program that helps soldiers to mature intellectually as leaders in the Army. Cadet Judith Antoine is currently a student at Virginia State University. Prior to her college enrollment, she was a sergeant who worked as a child specialist in the Army. Antoine has obtained a degree in English and speaks fluent French. She hopes to be commissioned as a military intelligence officer.

Prior-service cadets have already been exposed to different leadership styles and techniques in a military environment. This exposure helps them to get a head start on formu-

lating their own style in leading others, often based upon the leadership they have observed. 1st Regiment's push-up leader, Cadet Chris Paronto from Creighton University, served in the 75th Ranger Regiment prior to enrolling into ROTC.

"I had the privilege of serving with some outstanding officers. I've based my teachings on the way they taught me and the way they did things."

To make a smooth transition from enlisted soldier to commissioned officer, a soldier must be willing to adjust to a new type of environment. Many Green-to-Gold cadets say adapting is the most challenging thing they have done in their ROTC programs. Adjusting from being an enlisted soldier to a commissioned officer is one of many challenges that prior-service cadets must face on their journey from Green to Gold.

## Be on the lookout for God's grizzlies!

By Chap. (Lt. Col.) Doug Castle  
Chaplain for 2nd and 11th Regiments

Last year I was in a hurry to get home as I drove back to Missouri from Advanced Camp. Hundreds of bikers were on the interstate, converging on Sturgis, S.D., for their annual rally, so every Montana motel I tried was full. I was going to have to sleep in the back of my truck, and I was impatient. I stopped in Billings, Mont., to get gas, and as I tried to get back on the highway, all the streets were blocked by a parade. It took me more than 30 minutes to get out of town, which aroused my competitive spirit and left me fairly irritated.

(Flash back — I have always wanted to see a grizzly bear in the wild. When I was stationed in Alaska, I came close on several occasions. Once, when backpacking with my Chaplain Assistant, we crossed a stream. On the way back, right over my own footprint from the previous crossing, I found the dinner-plate-sized print of a very large bear. Yet I never saw one, and left Alaska with that desire still

imbedded in my heart.)

Leaving Billings behind, I crossed the Yellowstone River in Livingston. From the corner of my eye, I saw a large, brown animal loping across a green field near the river, less than 50 meters away! Looking directly at it, I was shocked to see a beautiful, light-brown grizzly making its way downstream. I pulled over and watched the bear for 20 minutes until it disappeared into the trees.

As I pulled away in amazement, I had to stop again. It seemed to me that this was one of those "God things." I was irritated and angry because circumstances beyond my control interrupted my own plan to drive home in a certain amount of time. Yet if I hadn't been delayed, I would never have seen the grizzly. A longstanding wish would never have been fulfilled.

I thought about this most of the way back to Missouri. The Apostle Paul wrote in the book of Romans that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. Neither the grizzly nor the traffic jam was an important event, in comparison to a lot of life's issues,

but they served to remind me that God sees the big picture and has my overall benefit in mind, but I can only see things immediately surrounding me, and get overwhelmed by something I perceive to be negative.

Cadets and cadre at camp exist in a fast-paced, stressful environment, often going for days with little sleep. Land Navigation and APFT failures, negative spot reports and evaluations, uncooperative squad members and other events overwhelm cadets. Red Cross messages, family events back home, problems with pay and a grueling schedule overwhelm cadre at times.

Yet to those who love God and are called according to His purposes, the promise remains that He causes all things to work together for good. Often a diversion from our planned path is God's way of steering us toward something better. When something happens which we perceive to be negative, it is then that we need to remind ourselves to lift up our eyes and be on the lookout for God's grizzlies!



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**Col. Daniel S. Challis**

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# Cadets are in awe of the SAW

Many say the M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon gives them an incredible feeling of raw power

By 2nd Lt. Kate Abbonizio

Fort Lewis' Range 79 is where cadets learn the characteristics, functions and employment of the M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW), the U.S. Army's primary squad-level source of battlefield firepower. Instruction begins around 1:15 p.m. for 3rd Regiment cadets in the form of a briefing from the officer in charge, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Wood from University of Texas, Arlington. His synopsis divides the training into four different 50-minute stations: assembly-disassembly, live-fire, preparing a range card and the Mad Dog Assault Course. From these four, cadets quickly indicated it was the live-fire location they liked best. Before this exercise very few cadets had a chance to shoot such a powerful weapon. While it is true cadets prefer some stations over others, "Every station teaches an important lesson in weapons training which ultimately culminates for the cadets later in camp during events such as Squad STX and Platoon Patrolling," said Master Sgt. Joe Jackson from William & Mary College, Williamsburg, Va., who is the NCOIC of the Automatic Weapons Range.

At the assembly-disassembly site, cadets took apart the M-249 while competing for the fastest time.



As the NCOIC of Automatic Weapons, Master Sgt. Joe Jackson, William & Mary College, is not content with just sitting in the TOC manning the equipment. Instead, cadets will find him supervising at every station throughout the day to ensure the Army standard of training is well maintained.

They paired up and worked with each other to learn every component in the weapon and its function. After some coaching and assistance by cadre members, the competition began. The prize for the cadet who was quickest to disassemble and then reassemble the weapon was the golden nugget - "Good for absolutely nothing," remarked one cadet who wished to remain anonymous. The golden nugget is analogous to the motivational bone given to the most enthusiastic platoon at the APFT. The nugget at the assembly-disassembly station provides motivation for the competitive cadets.

The range card station, while less interesting, is, in fact, the most beneficial. This class teaches the proper procedures the Army uses to best utilize the awesome firepower of their automatic weapons, like the SAW. A second lieutenant cannot lead a platoon and instruct his soldiers to fire without the

proper knowledge. Proficiency with a range card is a tool that will always be important and is necessary for the progression of an Army career. The cadre members at the range card station do not need a nugget for inspiration; rather they just remind the cadets that competency in this subject could save their lives.

A more colorful station is the Mad Dog Assault Course, where cadets competed for the best time in three-man buddy teams while learning basic principles about weapon placement. Sgt. 1st Class Michael Beck, from 1-339th Infantry, 7th Brigade, 84th Division, in Sturtevant Wis., said that the cadre are attempting to make the sights and sounds "as similar to combat as possible" with background smoke and pyrotechnics so cadets have a realistic combat environment to add to the stress factor.

The fourth, and of course, most interesting station of Automatic Weapons training is the live-fire range where cadets experienced the strength of the SAW. At this site, they fired in the prone fighting position as well as in a foxhole fighting position. While probably the most enjoyable for the cadets, the educational aspects of this station are innumerable. The weapons there are "Weapons that second lieutenants will certainly see in the near future and this exposure will enable cadets to be proficient for forthcoming endeavors, no matter the branch," said Jackson.



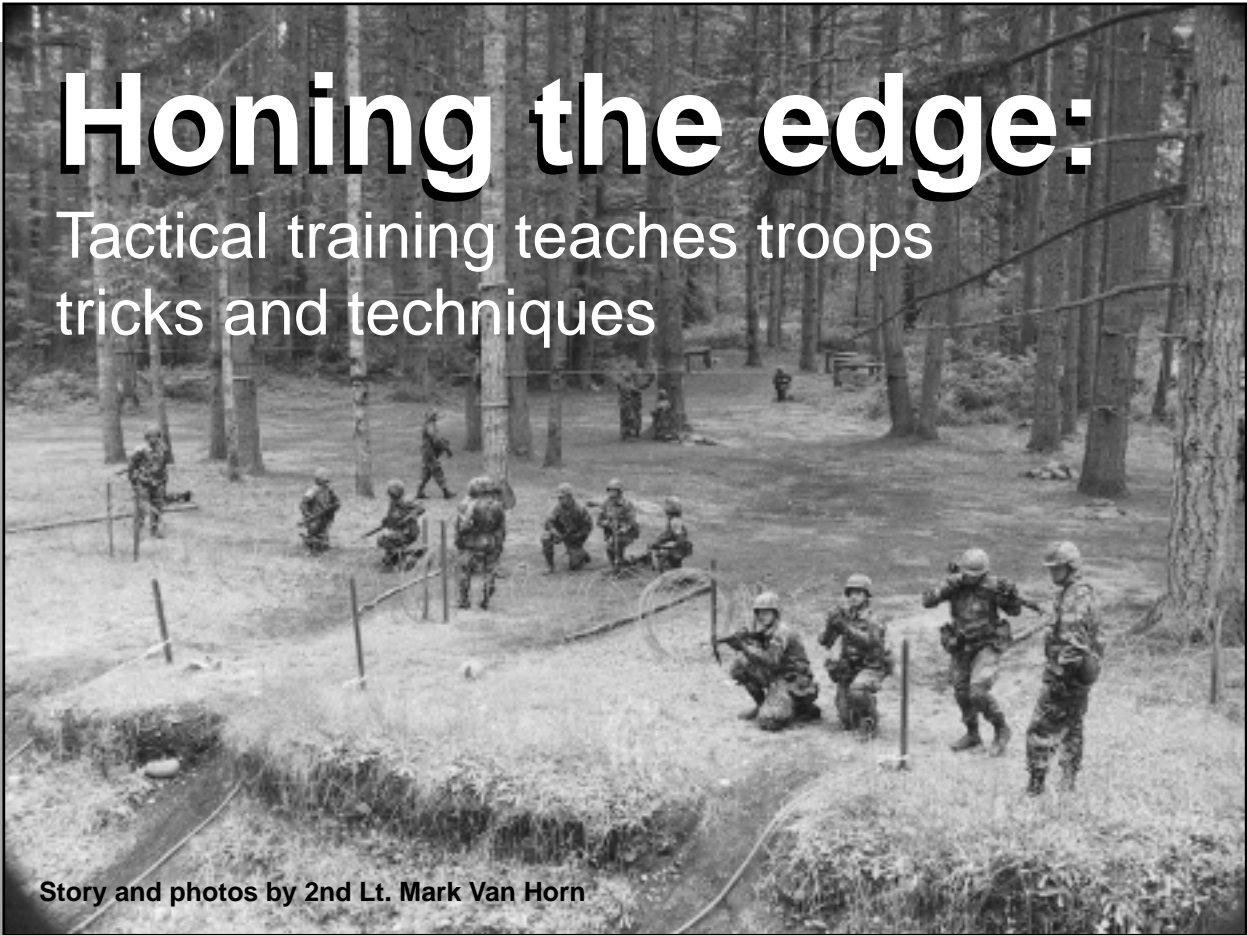
On the live range, Cadet Matthew O'Shea, North Dakota State University, squares in on his target and shoots to kill as his assistant gunner, Cadet Dan Weinstein waits anxiously for his turn.



Cadet Yen Nguyen, Creighton University, with the help of cadre learns the parts and functions of a crew-served weapon. This understanding is essential for the live-range exercises.

Yet, it is not just the instruction that burns a lasting memory in the cadet's mind, but also the feeling ignited when a cadet gets to hold the impressive SAW. The response is often indescribable, leaving some cadets speechless while others feel on top of the world. Cadet Dan Weinstein from Niagara University, expressed his first impression. "When I shot the SAW, I felt immediate power." It is this emotion that is attractive to the cadets when they arrive at the Automatic Weapons site. The opportunity to see, and in this case, even experience the force of a crew-served weapon like the SAW is priceless and for those cadets who will follow in the near future, Weinstein said it best: "Savor the moment!"





# Honing the edge:

## Tactical training teaches troops tricks and techniques

Story and photos by 2nd Lt. Mark Van Horn

A series of obstacles present a series of leadership challenges at the Individual Tactical Training site.

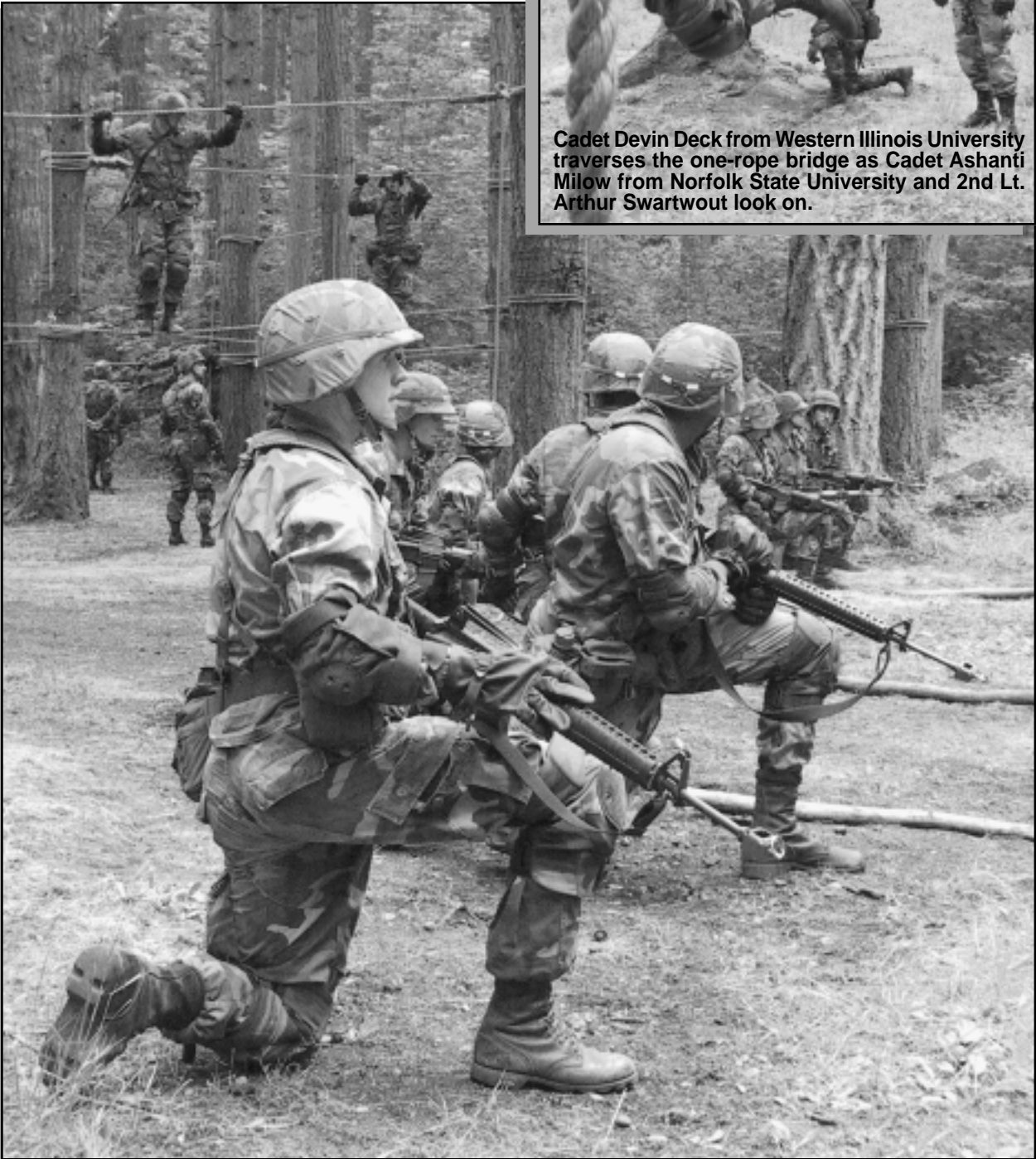
The first few regiments have it easy. The grass covering the Audie Murphy Assault Course lanes has yet to be bulldozed into a black dustbowl by the scraping action of cadets' Kevlars. Within a couple of weeks though, choking clouds of dirt will test the endurance and fortitude of cadets as they race through the 400-meter finale to Individual Tactical Training (ITT).

The mission of ITT is to teach cadets tactical movement techniques and prepare them for squad and patrolling exercises. The cadets receive six blocks of instruction covering assembly area procedures, actions on the objective, the squad orders process, individual movement techniques, knock out a bunker, fire team maneuvers and the Audie Murphy Assault Course.

"The maneuvers used here will also be used when they go out to Squad STX. We introduce them to the tactical role of the team leader, and then we expect them to actually give directions and execute the mission," said Lt. Col. Sam Doyle, the commanding officer for the ITT committee and the Professor of Military Science for Vanderbilt University.



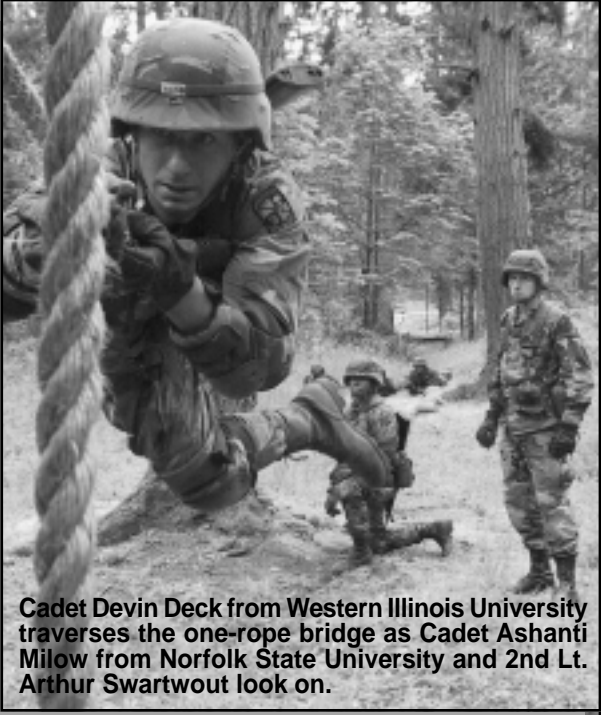
Getting there is half the fun, especially when you have to crawl through barbed wire!



Cadets from 2nd Platoon, Bravo Troop, 2nd Regiment must traverse many obstacles when learning how to maneuver as a team during Individual Tactical Training.

Each successive level of ITT training is harder by design. The first phase of training teaches cadets how to move tactically in buddy teams. They receive a demonstration in how properly executed buddy team rushes, high-crawls and low-crawls can destroy fortified enemy bunkers. Cadets strap on a set of elbow pads and kneepads, divide into buddy teams and tackle the first obstacle course. They must stay close to the dirt and must remember to check for mines, wires and booby traps. This is just a warm up for phase two, a one hundred meter assault course mimicking Audie Murphy, but one-quarter the distance.

The second phase of training combines the buddy teams into fire teams. This introduces cadets to the role of the team leader. The purpose of the one hundred meter assault course is to illustrate the role of the team leader in combat situations. "By extension we reinforce the role of the team leader and the necessity of 'When in charge, take



Cadet Devin Deck from Western Illinois University traverses the one-rope bridge as Cadet Ashanti Milow from Norfolk State University and 2nd Lt. Arthur Swartwout look on.

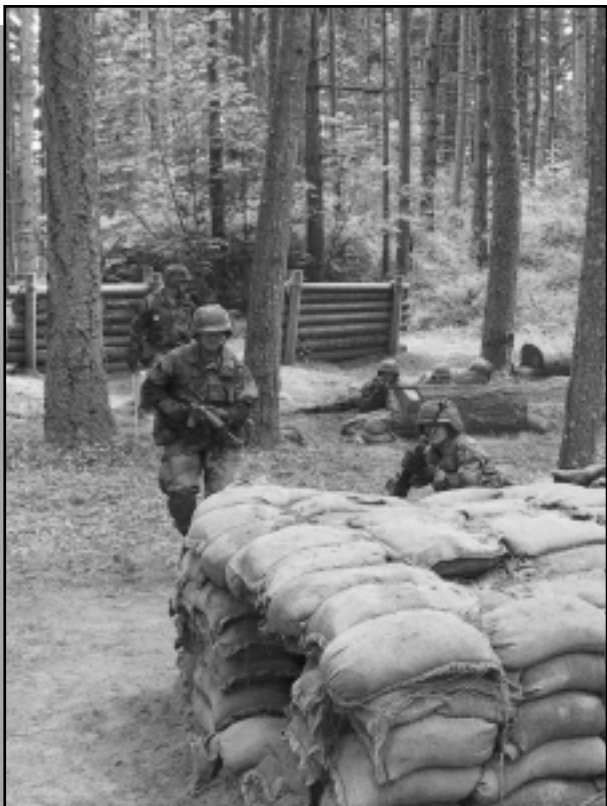




**Cadets from 2nd Platoon, Bravo Troop, 2nd Regiment overlook the next obstacle on the way to knock out a bunker while the rest of their fire teams cross the two-rope bridge.**

charge,”” stated Doyle. It is also an exhausting practice round to the Audie Murphy Assault Course. During this phase of training, cadets are coached along by ITT committee cadre, ensuring that all the tactical movements are performed as close to the ground as possible.

Before beginning the Audie Murphy Assault Course, cadets receive an operations order prepping them for the 400-meter charge to knock out a bunker. Afterwards, cadet team leaders and teams have 10 minutes to plan their




**Almost there ... cadets advance and cover as they approach a fortified bunker designated as the mission objective.**



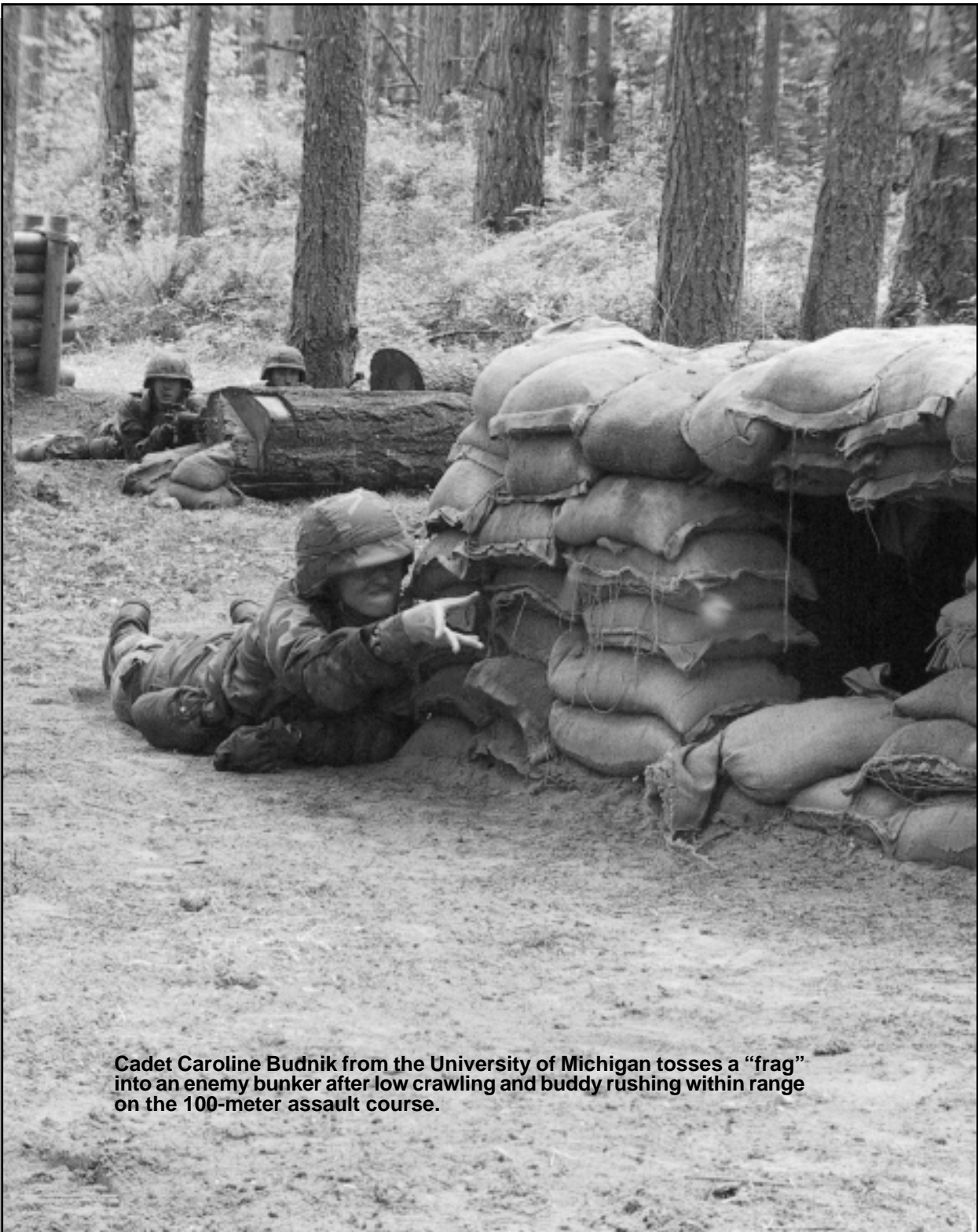
**Cadet Philip Martin from Missouri State University climbs out of the tank ditch during the Audie Murphy Assault Course surrounded by a cloud of green smoke.**

assault. They must negotiate a log cross over, a one-rope and a two-rope bridge, triple-strand concertina wire, a tank ditch, a tangle-foot obstacle, a log wall and finally they will assault a bunker. Perhaps the hardest events for cadets to complete during the course are the one- and two-rope bridges. The cadets are competing for the leader stakes event; the platoon with the lowest average time will receive the streamer. Cadets conduct an After Action Review after the course to learn ways to improve as a combat team. “Even though this is a timed event, it’s about completing the mission, and performing well as a team,” said 2nd Lt. Arthur Swartwout.

“This is a difficult and challenging course, the distance alone makes it challenging,” stated Doyle, “With their head in the dirt for so long, they gain an appreciation that this is tough. After completing Audie Murphy, they feel quite proud of themselves because it is a significant accomplishment.” said Doyle. 

## 2nd Lt. Doyle

By Bob Rosenburgh



**Cadet Caroline Budnik from the University of Michigan tosses a “frag” into an enemy bunker after low crawling and buddy rushing within range on the 100-meter assault course.**



# Mad dogs run wild!

Assault course stretches cadets' endurance to the bone

By 2nd Lt. Kate Abbonizio



A three-man team grabs its gear and jumps at the first obstacle they encounter at the Mad Dog Assault Course, low-lying sheets of barbed wire they will have to crawl beneath.

Green and yellow smoke saturated the air at Range 79 on the main post of Fort Lewis, Wash. Cadets from 3rd Regiment gasped for breath as they raced from one obstacle to another. A closer look showed the haze was just a remnant of the Mad Dog Assault Course, one of the four features during the Automatic Weapons Committee training.

Upon arrival at the assault course, cadets were briefed by Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Vandergrinten from Charlie Company 1-339th Infantry, 7th Brigade, 84th Division, Milwaukee, Wis., who is the NCOIC. After a short overview, the cadets then took their seats in the bleachers adjacent to the course. Cadre then gave a demonstration on the proper techniques of weapons placement and the various responsibilities, such as the gunner, assistant gunner and the ammunition bearer. The demonstration took about 15 minutes, but the most important lesson came right at the end, as Staff Sgt.

Randell Belilfuss, an instructor with Charlie Company, emphasized, "Never compromise accuracy for speed."

And then it began, as the first crews prepared. The horn reverberated. Field artillery simulators shattered the sound of silence. Ears popped. Pyro exploded. In the first lane, Cadet John Allen, from California State University, Cadet Matthew Kent, from Penn State University and Cadet Jonathan Perrone from Texas A&M, worked feverishly as a team to take the lead among their peers. The first barrier was the concertina wire. Allen led the way. Each lane had at least one cadre member supervising the cadets. The cadre's purpose was dual, working as a safety as well as a motivator.

Once Allen tackled the wire, he rushed to climb the wooden log fence. His two partners quickly approached and the maneuvering continued. By this point cadets had already designated the gunner, assistant gun-



Cadet John Allen, from California State University, climbs the wooden log fence - the second obstacle and usually the most time-consuming in the Mad Dog Assault Course.

ner and the ammunition bearer. However, some failed to remember that the weapons placement must be consistent with the demonstration in order to gain the maximum number of points. In most instances, this factor ultimately determines the overall winner.

After the wire obstacle and the fence, the three-man team negotiated the ditch. For this hurdle, cadets jumped in and over with all their equipment. They had to remember the best technique for positioning the crew-served weapons. The last test came with each soldier getting down in the prone fighting position and completing the crew drill. Perrone, the ammunition bearer, arrived first with Kent, not far behind, as the assistant gunner. Finally, Allen took his place in the woodchips and began to load the ammo. After performing the functions check every cadet must then affirm they are "up" and ready to go. At that moment, the timing has stopped.

For these three cadets, the mission was a success. Their time was exceptional - two minutes and 44 seconds. Though the crew did not beat the team record, it was the second fastest in the platoon. The course's aim is to incorporate solidarity and show just how well the Army can function if teamwork is integrated successfully. As Sgt. 1st Class Michael Beck commented, "The Mad Dog Assault Course, when done right, teaches these cadets to work as a team and this is the most important learning aspect out here." He mentioned how the 18 cadre members know these cadets will most likely be tired and worn out by the time they get to Automatic Weapons Day, since they are coming off of a long day at Land Navigation. "However," he said, "we use the pyro, the smoke, the nature of competition and the artillery simulators to motivate these cadets and, in almost every case, it works." Beck acknowledges that in years past the cadets had difficulty accepting the challenges of the assault course. But this year, with new improvements like putting dirt between the different obstacles where there were once woodchips, the course has not only lessened the chance of injury but also increased the level of proficiency and motivation.

As one of the four features of the Automatic Weapons day training, the Mad Dog Assault Course ranks a high second, just below the live-firing of an M-249 SAW. Cadets like Allen, Kent and Perrone worked together to hold the platoon record and with the help of cadre and each other, they accomplished what they set out to do. For cadets competing in the future, Allen said, "Make sure you listen and understand the demonstration and do not forget each weapon's function." However, his final observation reflected the entire day's training - "Make sure to work as a team." This is what the course conveys with every obstacle and barrier. What the Mad Dog Assault Course proved is that a team is only as good as its weakest link and a team can never succeed without every person working together, functioning as one.



Finally, this 3-man team, Allen, Kent and Perrone, is ready to execute the functions check after correctly performing the crew drill.





# Ammo NCO is an intricate individual

Story and photo by  
2nd Lt. Kate Abbonizio

What might a Harley-Davidson aficionado, an outreach volunteer, a distinguished military honoree, an excellent educator and an experienced soldier have in common? Easy. These characteristics are all defining features of a senior non-commissioned officers in 4th Region (ROTC) headquarters at Fort Lewis, Wash. You can find him, Sgt. 1st Class James Charles Hastings, sitting at his desk where he works as the NCOIC of National Advanced Leadership Camp Ammunition Logistics Committee.

Hastings was born in October of 1947 into a family of three boys. Within a year, his sister was born and the Hastings family was complete. He was drafted into the Army during the Vietnam War in 1968, but separated in 1971. Eventually, Hastings felt that something was missing in his life, so 14 years later he re-entered the military.

“It was interesting coming back in the Army at age 38 to be a private first class,” he recalled. Yet, he persevered. Discipline was a feature Hastings had grown accustomed to and in time he would become a master of it.

During his military career, Hastings served in such diverse locations as Vietnam, Saudi Arabia and Germany. For 20 years he was proficient as an aircrewman and his know-how earned him military acclamation. During duty in the United States, Hastings expanded his expertise to engine and weapons repair and finally ammunition control and regulation.

At NALC Hastings ensures that Fort Lewis provides the proper amount of ammunition needed for training more than 4,500 cadets. Events like Basic Rifle Marksmanship, Automatic Weapons, Fire Support, Individual Tactical



**Either on his Harley-Davidson bike or at the office, Sgt. 1st Class James Hastings is on the road to more future successful endeavors.**

Training, Squad and Patrolling Situational Training Exercises would not be possible without the hard work and determination of Hastings. His coordination ensures that the necessary ordnance required for each of these training exercises is available.

Ammunition control and regulation is not as easy as it sounds, though Hastings has made it seem effortless. His skills are borne of years of experience and long hours of study. Hastings earned bachelor’s degrees in both Aeronautical Science as well as Criminal Law. In addition, this is his fourth year at Fort Lewis working for the Cadet Command 4th Region Headquarters. During this time he received one of the most prestigious awards in his field, the TRADOC Ammunition Manager of the Year, not just once but twice in the fiscal years 1999

and 2001. This feat is the first ever for an NCO in TRADOC and Fort Lewis proudly claims Hastings as its own.


However, Army accolades are not the only defining feature in Hastings’ life. Besides his Army greens, Hastings keeps his Harley-Davidson near and dear to his heart. He began riding in the mid 1960s and liked it immediately. Throughout the years, Hastings owned several different modified versions of the Harley-Davidson, yet when he went to Germany he found love, with a Sportser motorcycle that is. This year he bought a ’98 Harley-Davidson Ultra Classic, 95th Edition. “It’s an anniversary item,” he said of this newest addition to his collection.

Hastings’ hobby has brought with it more than the possibility of speeding tickets. He has met his new fiancée, Sandy Souza, and has become an active

participant in various outreach programs. Four years ago in August, Hastings attended a biker’s church group in Tacoma called Scooter Tramps. During the get-together he learned about the Christian Motorcyclists Association (CMA) which is, according to its pamphlet, “a non-profit interdenominational Christian organization dedicated to reaching people for Christ in the highways and byways through motorcycling.” He instantly put his application in and soon after received word of his acceptance.

Within a few months he was a regular at the food runs and teddy bear runs, working with local police to visit and bring abused children in hospitals more than just a teddy bear. He still is a prominent volunteer in the outreach program and continues his many visits to prisons where he brings various bikes into the prison courtyard. He also assists at homeless shelters and frequents hospitals to aid abused children. Clearly, the Army values extend far beyond Hastings’ Battle Dress Uniform. This altruistic attitude is just one of the many extraordinary features in Hastings.

Soon, Hastings will bid goodbye to a life he has known for more than 30 years. On Oct. 31, Hastings is retiring from the Army. Though he still hasn’t decided if he will continue to work full time, he does acknowledge that he will have more time to participant in the outreach programs, adding jokingly, “That summer camp doesn’t leave me much time for anything else.” Fittingly, Hastings ends his career with yet another tribute, the Commander’s Award, which he will accept before he retires.

Hastings’ departure will leave some big shoes to fill at 4th Region headquarters. He is a humanitarian and a model soldier, embodying all the Army values and defining the essence of the perfect warrior leader. 

## Some cadets are already real American heroes

By 2nd Lt. Simon Flake

Soldiers in the United States Army are heroes because of the values they are called to live by and National Advanced Leadership Camp is a place where future Army leaders gather to enhance their skills in the science of warfare and the art of leadership. But there are two cadets currently training here at NALC that have already tapped into their potential for heroism.

Cadet Shikith Johnson, from Lincoln University, is one who paid close attention to the leadership lessons taught to her in ROTC classes. During the recent Christmas holiday, Johnson led a real rescue mission.

In December, while in Kansas City, Mo., Johnson took responsibility for the safety of her neighbors. A cooking mistake started a fire in a three-story apartment building across the street from Johnson’s home. At about 4 a.m. one morning, Johnson heard a woman screaming and responded immediately. “I jumped up and ran outside to a young lady who told me her apartment was on fire and her kids were stuck in the building,” she said.

Johnson ran back in the house and called 911-emergency services. “I ran back across the street and the building looked like something you’d see on TV,” described Johnson. “The windows were cracking and flames started shooting out of the building.”

She assessed the situation, then opened the apartment building’s door and started carrying children from the apartment

building to her home across the street. “Somehow the door got open and I was helping all of the kids out of the apartment, I ran across the street with three kids in my arms at one time,” Johnson recalled.

Johnson’s heroic effort resulted in saving a total of 10 children. After Johnson carried the children away from the burning building she took them to her house and gave them blankets to keep them warm. Johnson and her family opened their home as shelter to the fire victims until help arrived. The fire trucks and medical assistants arrived minutes later and put out the conflagration.

Johnson gave an outstanding example of leadership excellence that morning. “It was like react-to-contact,” said Johnson “I knew what I had to do and then I went and did it. If I wasn’t trained by ROTC, I probably would have panicked.”

This is an example of an awesome display of selfless service and personal courage. Johnson ran that mission like a squad leader during a situational tactical exercise.

Another cadet who acted as a hero outside of ROTC is Cadet Mark Thomas from the University of Delaware. Thomas was a firefighter for five years and he’s been certified as an emergency medical technician for three. Thomas compared the training and preparation to become a firefighter to becoming a soldier. “Firefighting training is very strenuous; it’s built in blocks; initially you have to take a basic course kind of like basic train-


ing,” he said.

Firefighters are promoted similar to the promotion of soldiers in the Army, after they gain experience and training. A novice firefighter is not permitted to enter a burning building. He or she must fight the fire from outside. After a firefighter has received advanced training, he or she can then perform interior firefighting.

Thomas is now a crew leader and has reached the level where he leads a team of firefighters into burning buildings to fight fires.

Thomas accredited firefighting for giving him a strong sense of teamwork. “Firefighting initially helped me to become a better team player, because everything is about teammates and team work,” said Thomas, “You have to be a team player in the fire company. The person behind you has got your life in his hands and vice versa it’s the same in the military.”

Thomas noted that one of his most memorable experiences as a firefighter was receiving a phone call at the station to rescue a cat from a tree.

Johnson and Thomas are two cadets who recognized leadership as being a way of life. They found ways to exercise their leadership skills outside of the ROTC program. Instead of performing the Army Values for an evaluation, Johnson and Thomas perform these values for life. These two cadets are two of many heroes among us. 



# NBC training takes on post-9/11 importance

By 2nd Lt. Mark Van Horn

Throughout the Cold War, a delicate balance of power existed between Soviet-stockpiled nuclear, biological, chemical weapons and ours. NBC was just too horrible, and many thought either side would never use them. Orders from the Army chief of staff disbanded the Chemical Corps in 1973. However, military intelligence discovered that the Soviets had developed an extensive NBC capability, and Army planners reinvigorated the Chemical Corps with a mission to protect and train American forces from NBC attacks.

Although 67 nations have agreed to ban the use of chemical weapons during war, many nations (including some signatories) have developed extensive NBC weapons facilities.

After high-level anthrax attacks in October, the possibilities of NBC terrorist attacks on home soil became a blatant reality. With the ascension of terrorism to the forefront of modern politics, the presence of these chemicals in the hands of renegade nations forces the United States Army to maintain NBC training. Now more than ever are there possibilities of soldiers entering an NBC environment.

Many future lieutenants' first exposure to NBC training happens during NALC. Cadets receive blocks of instruction on wearing gasmasks, MOPP (Mission Oriented Protective Posture) gear, decontamination, and how to spot a nuclear or chemical attack. After equipment issue and familiarization, cadets practice putting on a gasmask in eight seconds, drinking water from a canteen while wearing a gasmask, and checking the gasmask to ensure it's sealed.

Using full MOPP gear, cadets conduct a platoon-sized assault in a chemical environment, complete




Most soldiers and cadets realize that this uniform, the MOPP-4 protective clothing system, will likely save their lives in the near future.

with the 11th Chemical Company pouring smoke onto the training lane from the back of a humvee. This exposes cadets to the difficulties of working in an environment where the use of NBC weapons is possible.

Dehydration is a paramount risk because of the temperatures inside MOPP gear, and the muffling of gasmasks hinders communication. "This is the first day, unless you're prior service, to put your mask on, put your gear on, and really see how difficult it is to lead a squad effectively with all the smoke and confusion. You can't hear, you can't see, and it's hot," said Maj. Michael Forrest from the University of Dayton, executive officer for the NBC Committee.

The practice assault is preparation for the leader stakes event, a grueling assault up a hill in full level MOPP where cadets administer first aid to an incapacitated soldier, put on a gas mask in less than eight seconds, mimic decon procedures, and scale a hill in clumsy gear. Each squad is timed and the platoon with the lowest average receives the streamer for the day.

The final training exercise of the day is the most storied. Cadets enter a chemical environment, check their seals in the camphor chamber (camphor is a harmless gas, with an odor similar to Vicks), and march into a chamber filled with chlorobenzalmalononitrate mixed with methylene-chloride, commonly known as the riot control agent CS gas. Once in the chamber cadets remove their mask and try saying their social-security number, name, and university-some speak it, most don't. The purpose of cracking a seal on a functioning mask is to prove that it is a functioning mask.

"I think NBC is a confidence builder and prepares cadets for the commission because it's showing them that this is a profession that's got some serious things they need to learn. We're living in a world now where these weapons have been used," stated Forrest. 

## Chemical Corps in Korean War supported infantry operations

By 2nd Lt. Mark Van Horn

When the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) advanced across the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950 and started the Korean War, it marked the first time soldiers from a democracy battled communist forces for control of a country. The Republic of Korea Army (ROK) was unprepared for the quick and decisive attack of the Soviet-supported assault along the 38th parallel. The NKPA quickly seized the capital and moral center for all Korea: Seoul.

The ROK and United Nations forces fled down the length of the peninsula during Aug., but managed to halt the NKPA advance in a line around Pusan by Sept. Many units stateside quickly activated after receiving orders to deploy overseas in defense of South Korea. One of these units was the 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion, known as The Dragon.

Chemical mortar battalions served extensively during World War II. They were equipped with 32 M-2 4.2 inch mortars capable of firing a shell carrying six pounds of toxic agent-the only difference between chemical and infantry mortar battalions. As a result, and since no actual chemical attacks were ever conducted during the Korean War, chemical units served more like infantry. From a letter by Lt. Col. Edgar V. H. Bell, commander of the battalion, to Maj. Gen. E. F. Bullene, then Chief Chemical Officer of the Army, Bell wrote: "The men in the heavy mortar companies of the infantry regiments serve

the same piece, fire the same ammunition and are subject to the same hazards as are the men of our Battalion."

Immediately after the NKPA breakout, the 2nd, relieved of National Guard and Reserve training obligations, reported to the Army Chemical Center in Maryland. After receiving new equipment and replacements, the 2nd departed California on Sept. 22 and arrived at the port of Pusan on Oct. 8, 1950. For the next two weeks, The Dragon moved semi-tactically over battle-scarred terrain to catch up with the fast moving 8th Army, which had broken out of the Pusan Perimeter after the brilliant amphibious landing at Inchon. On Oct. 22 The Dragon began mortar operations in support of the 1st ROK Division.

As soon as it arrived, the 2nd began receiving intelligence reports about a massing of Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) 50 miles from the Chinese border north of the Yalu River. The pressure of probing attacks mounted until Nov. 1, when the CCF launched a massive attack that forced United Nations forces to retreat past the 38th parallel. The 2nd suffered heavy losses while in support of the 1st ROK. CCF elements encircled 3rd Platoon of Bravo Company inflicting stiff casualties as the unit tried to escape the entrapment. Alpha Company lost all their equipment after Chinese forces overran their position. Only Charlie Company escaped with minimal casualties.

Mortar support companies, unlike



A "Four-Deucer" squints down the sight of his M-2 mortar as he adjusts the elevation.

artillery companies, were often within 500 to 1500 meters of the frontlines. Mortarmen were frequently in small-arms fights while maintaining area security. The greatest danger to a mortar battalion however, was the greater-ranged 120 mm mortar used by the Chinese. It outranged the American M-2 4.2 inch by 2000 meters, but the venerable M-2 still provided accurate and powerful support to infantry units nonetheless.

As the UN forces retreated, and the Korean winter started, the soldiers of the 2nd, called four-deucers, faced harsh wartime conditions without being able to set up sufficient tents or shelters: "It is bitter

cold and, though the battalion has drawn special winter clothing, the men still suffer because there is no shelter. A couple of squad tents in each company rear would be worth their weight in gold," wrote Bell.

As January drew to a close, the Chinese attack lost strength, hampered by poor logistics and the overwhelming dominance of UN artillery barrages that inflicted stiff casualties on the massed formations of Chinese troops. Confidence returned to UN forces, and the front stabilized. UN firepower was too strong and solidified for the attack to continue further.

By Sept. 1951, The Dragon celebrated the firing of its 100,000th round of ammunition. That month the unit expended 47,297 rounds of ammunition, a new battalion record. The fronts of both armies stalled between the period after the CCF attack until the signing of the armistice at the end of 1953. By June 1951, the United States considered a plan to accept a cease-fire with a line of demarcation around the 38th parallel. Negotiations stalled for the next two years as negotiators struggled over details.

On Jan. 22, 1953, the Army redesignated 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion as the 461st Infantry Battalion (Heavy Mortar), qualifying the four-deucers to receive the Combat Infantryman Badge. On July 27, 1953, the United States and Korea signed an armistice, and the Korean War ended. 